

Numbers 26 - Thursday, January 20th, 2011

- The chapter we have before us is what gives the book of Numbers such bad press as it were, because it's about a bunch of numbers.
- Now, for those of you who've been with us through the study of the Old Testament, you're beginning to realize that it's not boring at all.
- While this study will be about the Israelite's numbers, it most certainly has profound application, as it relates to our lives. Here's why:

- It records the "effect" on the Israelites after the "affect" of "40" years in the fiery hot desert, and how it would "infect" a whole generation.
- It records Israel's 2nd census in order to prepare them, whereas the 1st census was for the purpose of what was prepared for them.
- It records how two from the old generation witness the new generation as they make their final preparation for the promised destination.

26:1 And it came to pass, after the plague, that the LORD spoke to Moses and Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest, saying: 2 "Take a census of all the congregation of the children of Israel from twenty years old and above, by their fathers' houses, all who are able to go to war in Israel." 3 So Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho, saying: 4 "Take a census of the people from twenty years old and above, just as the LORD commanded Moses and the children of Israel who came out of the land of Egypt."

- It's important to remember that about 40 years have gone by since the first census was taken, and quite a bit has happened since then.
- I believe this is one reason for the second census. Another reason is that this time they're on the cusp of entering the Promised-Land.
- In other words, this second census was for their preparation and organization both numerically and militarily to finally possess the land.

- This is one of several lessons that we would do well to learn when it comes to stepping out in faith and possessing the promises of God.
- We can have all our ducks in a row, so to speak, and be prepared and organized with our plan in place, but we have to put feet to it.
- Unless we step out in faith, all of our crunching of the numbers, and all of our most organized and best laid out plans are to no avail.
- Unless the Israelites entered in and stepped out they would have never been in possession of the Promised-Land that God gave them.

Hebrews 4:2 NKJV For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard *it*.

"There's a chemistry to take place. For example, when hydrogen is mixed with oxygen in the presence of heat, a chemical reaction takes place and water is produced. Two separate elements, when combined, yield an entirely different result than if they were never mixed. This is true in life as well. There's a chemistry that needs to occur in our lives - in what we see, hear, and know being mixed with faith. You may have needs or promises from God, but if they are never mixed with the element of faith, you will never see the reaction take place to bring those to fruition."

K.P. Yohannan, "Living By Faith Not By Sight"

- Let me hasten to say; this is an intelligent faith not a blind faith in that we would do well to make sure it's the Lord before stepping out.
- I think of Peter in the boat on the Sea of Galilee in the storm when he sees what he thinks is a ghost, then, hears Jesus say it's Him.
- Before stepping out of the boat in faith, he makes sure it's the Lord by asking; "Lord, if it's you, bid me come!" Then he walks on water.

5 Reuben was the firstborn of Israel. The children of Reuben were: of Hanoch, the family of the Hanochites; of Pallu, the family of the Palluites; 6 of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Carmi, the family of the Carmites. 7 These are the families of the Reubenites: those who were numbered of them were forty-three thousand seven hundred and thirty. 8 And the son of Pallu was Eliab. 9 The sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan, and Abiram. These are the Dathan and Abiram, representatives of the congregation, who contended against Moses and Aaron in the company of Korah, when they contended against the LORD; 10 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up together with Korah when that company died, when the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men; and they became a sign. 11 Nevertheless the children of Korah did not die.

- This is perhaps one of the most encouraging accounts in the scriptures because of what it says about the nature and character of God.
- Here we're reminded of Korah's death, back in Numbers 16, because of his rebellion, but the children of Korah didn't die for dad's sins.
- Actually, not only did God not punish them for the sins of their father, God would both bless them and use them as worship leaders.

- The sons of Korah would write beautiful worship songs that would come to be known as Psalms, and recorded in the book of Psalms.
- If you ever wanted to make a study of this you can read the songs in Psalms 42, 45, 46, 47, 48, 87, & 88. One of my favorites is Psalm 46.
- Suffice it to say, this refutes the false teaching of generational curses upon the children for the sins of the father to the next generations.

12 The sons of Simeon according to their families were: of Nemuel, the family of the Nemuelites; of Jamin, the family of the Jaminites; of Jachin, the family of the Jachinites; 13 of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites; of Shaul, the family of the Shaulites. 14 These are the families of the Simeonites: twenty-two thousand two hundred.

- Now we have recorded for us the census of the numbers of the tribe of Simeon according to their families, and it totals 22,200.
- You may wish to keep these numbers in your hip pocket, so to speak, because they will be germane to our understanding in a moment.

15 The sons of Gad according to their families were: of Zephon, the family of the Zephonites; of Haggi, the family of the Haggites; of Shuni, the family of the Shunites; 16 of Ozni, the family of the Oznites; of Eri, the family of the Erites; 17 of Arod, the family of the Arodites; of Areli, the family of the Arelites. 18 These are the families of the sons of Gad according to those who were numbered of them: forty thousand five hundred.

- Here the sons of Gad according to their families total 40,500 in this second census.

19 The sons of Judah were Er and Onan; and Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan.20 And the sons of Judah according to their families were: of Shelah, the family of the Shelanites; of Perez, the family of the Parzites; of Zerah, the family of the Zarhites.21 And the sons of Perez were: of Hezron, the family of the Hezronites; of Hamul, the family of the Hamulites.22 These are the families of Judah according to those who were numbered of them: seventy-six thousand five hundred.

- The sons of Judah total 76,500.

23 The sons of Issachar according to their families were: of Tola, the family of the Tolaites; of Puah, the family of the Punites; 24 of Jashub, the family of the Jashubites; of Shimron, the family of the Shimronites.25 These are the families of Issachar according to those who were numbered of them: sixty-four thousand three hundred.

- The tribe of Issachar comes in at a total of 64,300.

26 The sons of Zebulun according to their families were: of Sered, the family of the Sardites; of Elon, the family of the Elonites; of Jahleel, the family of the Jahleelites.27 These are the families of the Zebulunites according to those who were numbered of them: sixty thousand five hundred.

- The tribe of Zebulun totals 60,500.

28 The sons of Joseph according to their families, by Manasseh and Ephraim, were:29 The sons of Manasseh: of Machir, the family of the Machirites; and Machir begot Gilead; of Gilead, the family of the Gileadites.30 These are the sons of Gilead: of Jeezer, the family of the Jeezerites; of Helek, the family of the Helekites;31 of Asriel, the family of the Asrielites; of Shechem, the family of the Shechemites;32 of Shemida, the family of the Shemidaites; of Hephher, the family of the Hephherites.33 Now Zelophehad the son of Hephher had no sons, but daughters; and the names of the daughters of Zelophehad were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah.34 These are the families of Manasseh; and those who were numbered of them were fifty-two thousand seven hundred.

- The tribe of Manasseh comes in at a total of 52,700.

35 These are the sons of Ephraim according to their families: of Shuthelah, the family of the Shuthalhites; of Becher, the family of the Bachrites; of Tahan, the family of the Tahanites.36 And these are the sons of Shuthelah: of Eran, the family of the Eranites.37 These are the families of the sons of Ephraim according to those who were numbered of them: thirty-two thousand five hundred. These are the sons of Joseph according to their families.

- The tribe of Ephraim has a total of 32,500.

38 The sons of Benjamin according to their families were: of Bela, the family of the Belaites; of Ashbel, the family of the Ashbelites; of Ahiram, the family of the Ahiramites;39 of Shupham, the family of the Shuphamites; of Hupham, the family of the Huphamites.40 And the sons of Bela were Ard and Naaman: of Ard, the family of the Ardites; of Naaman, the family of the Naamites.41 These are the sons of Benjamin according to their families; and those who were numbered of them were forty-five thousand six hundred.

- The tribe of Benjamin's total is 45,600.

42 These are the sons of Dan according to their families: of Shuham, the family of the Shuhamites. These are the families of Dan according to their families.43 All the families of the Shuhamites, according to those who were numbered of them, were sixty-four thousand four hundred.

- The tribe of Dan comes in at 64,400.

44 The sons of Asher according to their families were: of Jimna, the family of the Jimnites; of Jesui, the family of the Jesuites; of Beriah, the family of the Beriites.45 Of the sons of Beriah: of Heber, the family of the Heberites; of Malchiel, the family of the Malchielites.46 And the name of the daughter of Asher was Serah.47 These are the families of the sons of Asher according to those who were numbered of them: fifty-three thousand four hundred.

- The tribe of Asher has a total of 53,400.

48 The sons of Naphtali according to their families were: of Jahzeel, the family of the Jahzeelites; of Guni, the family of the Gunites;49 of Jezer, the family of the Jezerites; of Shillem, the family of the Shillemites.50 These are the families of Naphtali according to their families; and those who were numbered of them were forty-five thousand four hundred.

- The tribe of Naphtali has a total of 45,400.

- Perhaps this would be a good time to answer the why behind the what of going through all of these seemingly mundane numbers.
- In order to do that I would like to reference chapter 49 in the book of Genesis. In the interest of time, we won't read the chapter.
- However, I would like to give you a thumbnail sketch so as to fill in some of the blanks, and connect some of the dots in this chapter.
- In other words the reason we have Numbers 26 in our Bibles is because God wants to both show us and teach to us life changing truth.

- By the way, we studied Genesis chapter 49 way back on June 28th, of 2008, and if you want, you can download it off of our website.
- In Genesis 49 we have recorded the last words of Jacob before he dies as he pronounces either a blessing or a curse on his 12 sons.
- The pronouncement of these blessings is prophetic in the sense that it is a prophecy concerning the tribes of Israel in the last days.

- It's interesting to note that this is the first prophetic word knowingly uttered by man. All the prophecies prior, had come only from God.
- Be that as it may, the second census in Numbers 26, gives us the forensic evidence that the Genesis prophecies were coming to pass.

TRIBE	1 st Census	2 nd Census	AFFECT	WHY (Genesis 49)	WHAT
Reuben	46,500	43,730	-2,770	v.4 "you went up to your fathers bed"	Lust
Simeon	59,300	22,200	-37,100	v.7 "you'll be cursed for your anger"	Cruelty
Gad	45,650	40,500	-5,150	v.19 "you will be attacked and attack"	Arguing
Judah	74,600	76,500	+1,900	v.8 "your brothers will praise you"	Worshipful
Issachar	54,400	64,300	+9,900	v.15 "you will be submissive"	Servant
Zebulun	57,400	60,500	+3,100	v.13 "you'll be a haven with extended borders"	Hospitable
Manasseh	32,200	52,700	+20,500	48:19 "you as Joseph's first son will be great"	Forgiving
Ephraim	40,500	32,500	-8,000	v.25 "your Father's God makes you fruitful"	Fruitful

- first let's address the question of why Ephraim had lower numbers at the second census, if he was to be blessed and become fruitful.
- The short answer is, Manasseh and Ephraim, as the two sons of Joseph, became one tribe replacing the tribes of Joseph and Levi.
- So, when you take the 20,500 increase of the tribe of Manasseh and subtract the decrease of 8,000, you still have an 11,500 more.

- This is where it gets interesting and it is easily missed at first glance. Notice the two tribes who experienced the most gain and loss.
- The tribe of Simeon suffered a loss of 37,100, and the tribe of Manasseh enjoyed a gain of 20,500. Now, think about who they were.
- We know in Genesis they're cursed as instruments of cruelty when they murdered all the men of Shechem in revenge for Dinah's rape.
- Now contrast that with Joseph's son Manasseh, whose name means causing to forget or forgive, if you will. Manasseh gained the most.

- Perhaps by now you know where this is going, because the lesson here becomes so clear as it relates to vengeance and forgiveness.
- To be like Simeon and mete out cruel revenge against those who have wronged you, will cost you, even reduce you to a bitter end.
- I think of Ahithophel, King David's right hand man. Here's a man who spoke the oracles of God, yet bitter revenge cost him his very life.

- Conversely, Joseph, who had every right to mete out revenge in his righteous anger for what his brothers had done to him, doesn't.
- He freely forgives them and forgets what they did to him. This is why he names his two sons forgiveness and fruitful.
- You're fruitful when you forgive, but when you seek revenge, you're reduced and brought down by the cruelty of your own bitterness.

Benjamin	35,400	45,600	+10,200	v.27 "you will divide the spoil"	Wise
Dan	62,700	64,400	+1,700	v.16 "you will govern over and judge justly"	Just
Asher	41,500	53,400	+11,900	v.20 "your food will be a rich delicacy"	Loving
Naphtali	53,400	45,400	-8,000	v.21 "your like a deer trying to be free"	Striving

51 These are those who were numbered of the children of Israel: six hundred and one thousand seven hundred and thirty.

- Now this is where it gets very interesting and very telling here in verse 51 which has the total of all 12 tribes of Israel at this 2nd census.

BEFORE AND AFTER	NUMBERS
26:51 "The total number of the men of Israel was..."	601,730 @ 2 nd Census
2:32 "All those in the camps, by their divisions, number..."	603,550 @ 1 st Census
Total numbers of Israelite men were regressing not progressing.	-1,820 Less after 40 years.

- To me, this is one of the many lessons we can take away from the whole chapter with the total of the whole 12 tribes after 40 years.
- Here's what I'm thinking; while individually some tribes had growth, collectively with all the tribes, there's no growth after, 40 years.
- At first glance, one might think that at least they didn't suffer too much loss, however, when you think about it, this is very sobering.

- Here's why, believers who are walking in rebellion and disobedience can become a hindrance to the whole congregation, collectively.
- Instead of going, growing and glowing, they will end up groaning and moaning like the Israelites who stay the same after all that time.
- This is not meant to condemn, rather it's meant to convict. We would all do well to ask the Lord to search our hearts concerning this.

52 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: 53 "To these the land shall be divided as an inheritance, according to the number of names.

54 To a large tribe you shall give a larger inheritance, and to a small tribe you shall give a smaller inheritance. Each shall be given its inheritance according to those who were numbered of them. 55 But the land shall be divided by lot; they shall inherit according to the names of the tribes of their fathers. 56 According to the lot their inheritance shall be divided between the larger and the smaller."

- In what should be deemed as a firm grasp of the obvious, the larger needed more land, and the smaller tribe would need less land.
- Lest we miss the lesson here, let me hasten to say that this is true in our lives. Whatever our need is, His hand is faithful to provide.
- However, we get into trouble when we expect God to provide more than what we really need, then get disenchanted when He doesn't.

- That being said, there's another life lesson that's woven into the fabric of these verses in how it relates to how much we are given.
- In other words, to whom much is given, much is required. God knows how much He can trust us with as stewards of what we receive.

57 And these are those who were numbered of the Levites according to their families: of Gershon, the family of the Gershonites; of Kohath, the family of the Kohathites; of Merari, the family of the Merarites. 58 These are the families of the Levites: the family of the Libnites, the family of the Hebronites, the family of the Mahlites, the family of the Mushites, and the family of the Korathites. And Kohath begot Amram. 59 The name of Amram's wife was Jochebed the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt; and to Amram she bore Aaron and Moses and their sister Miriam. 60 To Aaron were born Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61 And Nadab and Abihu died when they offered profane fire before the LORD. 62 Now those who were numbered of them were twenty-three thousand, every male from a month old and above; for they were not numbered among the other children of Israel, because there was no inheritance given to them among the children of Israel.

- It's important to understand that the Levites were not numbered in either census, because the priestly tribe was not to go to war.

63 These are those who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan, across from Jericho. 64 But among these there was not a man of those who were numbered by Moses and Aaron the priest when they numbered the children of Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai. 65 For the LORD had said of them, "They shall surely die in the wilderness." So there was not left a man of them, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun.

- This is because the generation of unbelief would perish in the wilderness and there was no need to include them in this second census.
- From that generation there would be only two that would enter, Caleb and Joshua. This brings up one final thought from this chapter.
- Notice that we have three groups of two men mentioned in this chapter; Dathan and Abiram, Nadab and Abihu, then Caleb and Joshua.
- As one commentator so aptly put it; Dathan and Abiram rebelled, Nadab and Abihu presumed, and Caleb and Joshua simply believed.